

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for aggregating person-centric information for displaying in a user interface, comprising:
 - parsing an electronic document for a person name;
 - passing the person name to one or more data sources containing person-centric data;
 - at the one or more data sources, obtaining any person-centric data associated with the person name;
 - populating a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data obtained at the one or more data sources; and
 - providing a graphical user interface for displaying the person-centric data adjacent to the person name in the electronic document.
2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising displaying one or more name-centric actions in the graphical user interface
3. The method of Claim 1, whereby parsing an electronic document for a person name includes obtaining unique identifying information associated with the person name.
4. The method of Claim 3, whereby obtaining unique identifying information associated with the person name includes obtaining any data associated with the person name that may be used to identify the person name.
5. The method of Claim 4, whereby obtaining unique identifying information associated with the person name includes obtaining an electronic mail address for the person name.

6. The method of Claim 3, further comprising:
if no unique identifying information is associated with the person name in the electronic document, recognizing the person name from text or data in which the person name is included;
passing the recognized person name to a contacts database; and
at the contacts database, obtaining unique identifying information for the person name.

7. The method of Claim 3, further comprising passing the unique identifying information associated with the person name to the one or more data sources of person-centric data.

8. The method of Claim 7, whereby passing the unique identifying information associated with the person name to the one or more data sources of person-centric data includes passing an electronic mail address to the one or more data sources of containing person-centric data.

9. The method of Claim 1, whereby passing the person name to one or more data sources containing person-centric data includes passing the person name to the one or more data sources via a persona menu application.

10. The method of Claim 9, further comprising querying the one or more data sources by the persona menu application.

11. The method of Claim 10, prior to populating a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data, returning the any person-centric data associated with the person name from the one or more data sources to the persona menu application.

12. The method of Claim 1, prior to populating a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data, building a data structure having data properties corresponding to person-centric data obtainable from the one or more data sources.

13. The method of Claim 4, whereby if the one or more data sources do not contain person-centric data matching unique identifying information associated with the person name, querying a contacts database for an alternate unique identifying information associated with the person name; and

passing the alternate unique identifying information associated with the person name to the one or more data sources for obtaining person-centric data for the alternate electronic mail address.

14. The method of Claim 2, prior to providing a graphical user interface for displaying the person-centric data adjacent to the person name in the electronic document, further comprising:

obtaining one or more name-centric actions for application to the person name; and

populating the data structure for the person name with the one or more name-centric actions.

15. The method of Claim 1, prior to providing a graphical user interface for displaying the person-centric data, labeling the person name in the electronic document to indicate available functionality.

16. The method of Claim 15, further comprising providing an icon in the electronic document adjacent to the person name for selectively displaying the graphical user interface.

17. The method of Claim 1, whereby the person-centric data includes online/offline status for the person name.

18. The method of Claim 1, whereby the person-centric data includes free/busy status information for the person name.

19. The method of Claim 1, whereby the person-centric data includes office location information for the person name.

20. The method of Claim 1, whereby the person-centric data includes telephone numbers for the person name.

21. The method of Claim 1, whereby the person-centric data includes information related to additional person names associated with the person name.

22. The method of Claim 1, whereby the one or more data sources includes a contacts database.

23. The method of Claim 1, whereby the one or more data sources includes an instant messaging database.

24. The method of Claim 1, whereby the one or more data sources includes a distributed computing environment directory services database.

25. The method of Claim 1, whereby the one or more data sources includes a free/busy status database.

26. A computer readable medium containing computer readable instructions which when executed by a computer perform a method for aggregating person-centric information for displaying in a user interface, comprising:

parsing an electronic document for an electronic mail address associated with a person name;

passing the electronic mail address to one or more data sources containing person-centric data;

at the one or more data sources, obtaining any person-centric data associated with the person name;

populating a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data obtained at the one or more data sources;

labeling the person name in the electronic document to indicate available functionality

upon user selection of the labeled person name, providing a graphical user interface for displaying the person-centric data adjacent to the person name in the electronic document.

27. The computer readable medium of Claim 26, further comprising:

if no electronic mail address is available for the person name in the electronic document, recognizing the person name from text or data in which the person name is included;

passing the recognized person name to a contacts database; and

at the contacts database, obtaining an electronic mail address for the person name.

28. The computer readable medium of Claim 26, whereby if the one or more data sources do not contain person-centric data matching the electronic mail address, querying a contacts database for an alternate electronic mail address associated with the person name; and

passing the alternate electronic address associated with the person name to the one or more data sources for obtaining person-centric data for the alternate electronic mail address.

29. The computer readable medium of Claim 26, prior to populating a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data, building a data structure having data properties corresponding to person-centric data obtainable from the one or more data sources.

30. The computer readable medium of Claim 26, further comprising displaying one or more name-centric actions in the graphical user interface

31. The computer readable medium of Claim 26, prior to providing a graphical user interface for displaying the person-centric data adjacent to the person name in the electronic document, further comprising:

obtaining one or more name-centric actions for application to the person name; and

populating the data structure for the person name with the one or more name-centric actions.

32. The computer readable medium of Claim 31, further comprising providing an icon in the electronic document adjacent to the person name for selectively displaying the graphical user interface.

33. The computer readable medium of Claim 26, whereby the person-centric data includes online/offline status for the person name.

34. A system for aggregating person-centric information for displaying in a user interface, comprising:

- a computer operative to operate one or more application program modules and to display one or more electronic documents and graphical user interfaces;
- an application program operative to receive text or data in an electronic document;

- a persona menu application program operative

- to parse the electronic document for a unique identification associated with a person name;

- to pass the unique identification to one or more data sources containing person-centric data;

- to parse the one or more data sources for obtaining any person-centric data associated with the person name;

- to populate a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data obtained at the one or more data sources;

- to labeling the person name in the electronic document to indicate available functionality; and

- to provide a graphical user interface for displaying the person-centric data adjacent to the person name in the electronic document, upon user selection of the labeled person name.

35. The system of Claim 34, the persona menu application being further operative:

- to recognize the person name from text or data in which the person name is included, if no electronic mail address is available for the person name in the electronic document;

- to pass the recognized person name to a contacts database; and

- to obtain a unique identification for the person name at the contacts database.

36. The system of Claim 35, whereby the persona menu application is further operative:

to query a contacts database for an unique identification associated with the person name if the one or more data sources do not contain person-centric data matching the electronic mail address; and

to pass the alternate unique identification associated with the person name to the one or more data sources for obtaining person-centric data for the alternate electronic mail address.

37. The system of Claim 34, whereby the persona menu application is further operative to build a data structure having data properties corresponding to person-centric data obtainable from the one or more data sources prior to populating a data structure for the person name with the any person-centric data.

38. The system of Claim 34, whereby the persona menu application is further operative:

to obtain one or more name-centric actions for application to the person name;

to populate the data structure for the person name with the one or more name-centric actions; and

to display one or more name-centric actions in the graphical user interface.

39. The system of Claim 34, the persona menu application being further operative to provide an icon in the electronic document adjacent to the person name for selectively displaying the graphical user interface.

40. The system of Claim 34, whereby the person-centric data includes online/offline status for the person name.

41. The system of Claim 34, whereby the person-centric data includes free/busy status information for the person name.

42. The system of Claim 34, whereby the person-centric data includes office location information for the person name.

43. The system of Claim 34, whereby the person-centric data includes telephone numbers for the person name.

44. The system of Claim 34, whereby the person-centric data includes information related to additional person names associated with the person name.

45. The system of Claim 34, whereby the one or more data sources includes a contacts database.

46. The system of Claim 34, whereby the one or more data sources includes an instant messaging database.

47. The system of Claim 34, whereby the one or more data sources includes a distributed computing environment directory services database.

48. The system of Claim 34, whereby the one or more data sources includes a free/busy status database.

49. The system of Claim 35, whereby the unique identification includes any data associated with the person name that may be used to identify the person name.

50. The system of Claim 49, whereby the unique identification includes an electronic mail address for the person name.